

PAGE 1

Semi-splash – PANEL 2 taking up the vast bulk of the space.

PAGE 1 PANEL 1

Close-up on Sabretooth's face – his teeth bared in a savage snarl. A blue hand – Hank's, obviously – holds up a hypodermic syringe very close to Sabretooth, and Sabretooth's gaze is locked on it.

BEAST [OP]: Hard or easy, Creed.

BEAST [OP]: You're going to have to take your medicine.

SABRETOOTH: You bring that thing near me, there's gonna be blood and hair on the walls.

PAGE 1 PANEL 2

Out wide. We're in Sabretooth's cell, where Hank has come to administer the treatment that Rogue has in mind for him – an injection of nano-sentinels into his system. Iceman, Cannonball and Karima are also present, riding shotgun, which is just as well because Creed erupts into violent resistance here, ripping his chains out of the wall and swinging them like a flail. Hank leaps agilely away out of harm's way, but the situation has just become volatile and dangerous.

SABRETOOTH [SCREAMS IN RAGE]: NAUUUURGHHH!

ROGUE: Look out, Hank! He's free!

BEAST: Thank you, Rogue.

BEAST: That would have been my diagnosis too, but it's always good to have a second opinion.

PAGE 2 PANEL 1

Staying wide. Iceman and Karima both cut loose at Sabretooth – Iceman with a spear of ice, Karima with a force beam of some kind from her wrist cannon – as Sabretooth leaps for Rogue, swinging the chains so that they wrap around her arm and throw her off balance.

ICEMAN: High-low, Karima!

KARIMA: Embedding adamantium chains in a brick wall doesn't work.

KARIMA: Any restraint device is only as strong as its weakest link.

PAGE 2 PANEL 2

Tight two-shot on Rogue and Sabretooth. Grinning wickedly, he claws at her face: she fends him off with difficulty. One of her hands pulses with heat energy – the Sunfire power – but he pins it down or swats it away.

SABRETOOTH: Sounds like your X-Men, don't it, darlin'?

SABRETOOTH: Who's your weakest link? Kind of spoiled for choice, I reckon.

PAGE 2 PANEL 3

Out wide. Cannonball rockets into Sabretooth and slams him hard – very hard – into the wall of his cell.

SFX: KRAKOOOOOM

PAGE 2 PANEL 4

Low angle shot looking up past Sabretooth's sprawled, unconscious body towards Cannonball who stands over him warily, watching to see whether he moves again. In the background, Rogue picks herself up off the floor.

CANNONBALL: Brick wall makes a neat restraint device all on its own, sometimes.

ROGUE: Good work, Sam.

CANNONBALL: Was it, Rogue? I'm not feeling all that good about it. Let's finish this.

PAGE 3 PANEL 1

Out wide, with Hank in the foreground. He administers the injection to the unconscious Sabretooth – injecting into his neck. The other watch.

HANK: I have my own misgivings, which are on record.

ROGUE: This is Sabretooth, Hank. If we can put him on a tight rein - - forever - - think how many lives we might be saving.

HANK: If. That eases my conscience by the width of a toothpick.

PAGE 3 PANEL 2

Two-shot on Rogue and Beast. Beast walks towards the door, not looking back: Rogue turns to stare after him, not wanting his aproval but respecting him enough to try to explain.

ROGUE: There's more at stake here than Creed's civil rights.

HANK: There always is, Rogue. I'll be in the infirmary if I'm needed.

HANK: Someone else can clear up this mess.

PAGE 3 PANEL 3

Hank in a corridor of the mansion, walking along with his head down, deep in thought.

PAGE 3 PANEL 4

Rotate POV. Hank looks up, startled out of his reverie, to see a bunch of New X-Men – Mike, how about Anole, Butterfly Girl, Rockslide and Mercury? – ahead of him, all staring at something that's off-panel. They're agog, intent, thrilled and in Rockslide's case somewhat aroused.

MERCURY: Oh wow. I've seen her in the X-Men mission logs.

ROCKSLIDE: Yeah? Not looking like that you haven't.

HANK: What am I missing, students? What new wonder has arisen to enchant and divert us?

PAGE 3 PANEL 5

Close-up on the Beast's face. Unhappy realisation dawns.

HANK: Oh.

PAGE 3 PANEL 6

Tight on Lady Mastermind - naked except for a sheet, which only just conceals the salient parts of her body. She's weak and groggy, leaning against the door of the med lab to prop herself up, and her expression is grim.

HANK [OP]: Lady Mastermind, I presume.

LADY M: Beast. I've got - - some questions.

LADY M: You'd better have - - answers or I'm - - dropping the "lady".

PAGE 4 PANEL 1

External shot of the mansion.

CABLE [FROM INSIDE THE MANSION]: The verdict of history?

CABLE [FROM INSIDE THE MANSION]: What do you mean by that, exactly?

PAGE 4 PANEL 2

Inside the gutted danger room. Out wide. Cable is accessing the info-net and so he's seriously distracted: as when we saw him last, he's jacked into the hologram projector so that we can see what information he's accessing. Mystique stands behind him, watching him work with intense interest.

MYSTIQUE: Precisely what I say, Cable. How does the future remember us?

MYSTIQUE: Specifically, how does it judge the part we play here and now in protecting the remnants of mutantkind?

CABLE: History is short on specifics, Mystique. It remembers broad movements, not individuals.

PAGE 4 PANEL 3

Into two-shot. Mystique moves in closer to Cable, glares at him as if she takes exception to those words. Cable remains distant and detached as data - at the moment mostly satellite photo images - speed past him at subliminal speeds.

MYSTIQUE: No, an individual whose actions are pivotal will always be remembered. A Hitler, say, or a Gandhi.

CABLE: And you'd like to know which you are?

MYSTIQUE: Hardly.

PAGE 4 PANEL 4

Tight on Cable. His eyes narrow as he concentrates.

CABLE: Your name does survive in the databases of my time. It's a generic term for a traitor - - as Judas is now.

CABLE: Does that help at all?

PAGE 4 PANEL 5

Back out to two-shot. Cable frowns, annoyed at the distraction. The satellite image scrolling past behind him shows part of the US coastline. Mystique looks shocked.

MYSTIQUE: A traitor? To who?

CABLE: It was two thousand years in my past. It's just a folk legend.

CABLE: Please, this is distracting me from the task in hand. I'm trying to locate the Conquistador so we can - -

PAGE 4 PANEL 6

Close-up on Cable's face. His eyes widen.

CABLE: Damn.

CABLE: Found it.

PAGE 5 PANEL 1

Cut to a wide, dramatic shot, high angle, of the airborne oil tanker flying over Arizona-like American desert.

CABLE CAPTION: "But that's where the good news ends."

PAGE 5 PANEL 2

Inside the Conquistador – on the bridge-like space that we saw in #191, from which Sangre controls operations. All of the Children that we've met so far are there, and they're all looking ahead – probably at some screen or holo-display out of our line of sight. The predominant mood is one of calm interest, but Aguja is full of suppressed excitement at the carnage to come.

PERRO: Is it this easy to penetrate US airspace?

SERAFINA: No. We're cloaked, Perro. Invisible to radar and telemetry.

SERAFINA: The people in the streets see us. The military don't. So on what co-ordinates would they scramble?

PAGE 5 PANEL 3

Two-shot on Sangre and Serafina. They exchange a glance, Sangre calm and Serafina startled.

SANGRE: Let's make this easier for them. Drop the cloak, Serafina.

SERAFINA: Now, Sangre? But we're still more than two thousand miles from --

SANGRE: I know. We tried to hide, but that option is closed to us now.

PAGE 5 PANEL 4

Tight on Sangre. He frowns in sombre thought.

SANGRE: Now we come as executioners – of the mutants, and then of the humans whose world we need for our own expansion.

SANGRE: So let's announce ourselves with due solemnity.

PAGE 6 PANEL 1

Cut back to the X-mansion – to the corridor outside the med lab. Tight on the Beast, who is instantly tense and wary as he sees who he’s facing.

HANK: If you make any sudden or hostile moves - -

HANK: - - I may have to forget my Hippocratic oath.

PAGE 6 PANEL 2

Out wide. Lady M faces the Beast with a cool, ironic insouciance. He glares at her. The New X-Men – there are more of them present now, crucially including Ernst – watch in wide-eyed fascination from the background.

LADY M: If I move at all, McCoy, this sheet is gonna slip - -

LADY M: - - and your Hippocratic oath’s gonna take a real hit to the head. Or parts South.

HANK: You flatter yourself, Ms. Wyngarde. You’re not my type.

PAGE 6 PANEL 3

Out wide. Scowling bleakly, Lady Mastermind gestures, and a memory – projected as an illusion – blossoms around her. The memory is of the events in X-Treme X-Men#9, with Tessa (Sage) firing a bullet at Lifeguard and a different version of Sage – in Lifeguard’s golden armour – leaping into the path of the bullet. At least I hope that’s what happened: if I’ve screwed up the details, I apologise. For the sake of emphasising that Lady M was involved in these events, let’s have her orchestrating them from the background, grinning in evil triumph.

LADY M: Last thing I remember is this. Back when the Hellfire Club were still paying my bills.

LADY M: So how come I wake up on a slab in Doctor Frankenstein’s lab?

LADY M: And why is my head full of that Southern-fried fool, Guthrie?

PAGE 6 PANEL 4

Out wide. The Beast waves a hand towards the lab, looking sternly at the New X-Men. They’re reluctant to miss the rest of this little episode.

HANK: I’ll explain inside.

LADY M: I want to know what’s going on here. Am I a prisoner?

HANK: I'll explain inside.

ROCKSLIDE: Can we come too?

HANK: That would be a no, Rockslide.

ROCKSLIDE: Awwwww!

PAGE 6 PANEL 5

Staying wide. The New X-Men start to disperse. Rockslide grins. Butterfly Girl and Mercury look at him with disapproval.

BUTTERFLY GIRL: That's the woman they found in a coma? She seems a lot better all of a sudden.

ROCKSLIDE: Prof McCoy's got healing hands.

MERCURY: Don't be gross, Santo. Try to remember - -

PAGE 7 PANEL 1

Inside the lab. Tight on Lady M. She looks stunned and angry.

MERCURY CAPTION: “ - - some people are a little more delicate than you are.”

LADY M: What?

LADY M: No way. Just - - no way. That's not possible.

PAGE 7 PANEL 2

Out wide to show setting. Hank is examining Lady M using some kind of 3d imager. She's glaring at him angrily.

BEAST: I'm afraid it's true. You were unconscious for more than a year.

BEAST: We found you in a private hospital, where apparently you were being held incognito by a person or organisation named Pan. That's all we know for the moment.

PAGE 7 PANEL 3

Tight on Hank. He adjusts the calibrations on the imager.

BEAST: As for your memories of Cannonball, a woman who calls herself Serafina hacked your nervous system and then used your illusion powers to get into his mind.

BEAST: That may even have been what caused you to wake.

PAGE 7 PANEL 4

Out to two-shot. Lady M determinedly pushes the business end of the imager away from her, locking eyes belligerently with Hank.

LADY M: Man, I've been on my feet five minutes and already I've got a hit list.

LADY M: Life is good. Where's this chick at now?

LADY M: Bring me to her.

PAGE 7 PANEL 5

Tight on Hank. He frowns in thought, looking away.

EMMA [telepathically - tailless balloon]: Beast? Some O.N.E. soldiers have just turned up at the door with a decomposing corpse. They want to commandeer your freezer.

BEAST [TAILLESS BALLOON]: Send them down, Emma. And - -

BEAST [TAILLESS BALLOON]: - - could you tell Rogue there's someone here in the lab she might want to talk to?

PAGE 8 PANEL 1

Back to the Conquistador – or rather, to the skies over whatever part of the American West they’re currently flying through. A squadron of fighter planes streaks across the sky, past rolling farmland.

MERCURY CAPTION: “ - - some people are a little more delicate than you are.”

PAGE 8 PANEL 2

Two-shot on Fuego and Aguja standing in the sky ahead of the Conquistador, calmly watching the planes come on.

FUEGO: A show of force.

AGUJA: Force? Pienso no, Fuego.

AGUJA: Their hands are empty.

PAGE 8 PANEL 3

Out wide. The planes fire a flight of missiles, which streak towards the Conquistador. Fuego and Aguja stand full in their path.

PAGE 9 PANEL 1

Tight on Aguja. She unleashes her power and obliterates the missiles in flight. Some of them detonate, but far enough away from her to present no danger.

PAGE 9 PANEL 2

Out wide. Fuego spreads his arms and a huge gout of searing flame leaps from his torso to envelope the planes, melting their fuselages, detonating their fuel tanks and generally destroying them before the pilots have a chance even to react.

PAGE 9 PANEL 3

High angle shot looking down towards Fuego and Aguja as they calmly watch the wrecked planes spiralling down towards the ground, trailing plumes of black smoke.

FUEGO: Shall we keep score, Aguja?

AGUJA: Why bother?

AGUJA: We both know I'll win.

PAGE 10 PANEL 1

Cut to the X-mansion – and to the hangar where the Blackbirds are kept. Wide, dramatic shot. Rogue heads towards one of the Blackbirds, and Cyclops strides after her, angry and determined. Bobby and Sam are prepping the plane, whose ramp is down.

CYCLOPS: Rogue!

CYCLOPS: Stand down!

PAGE 10 PANEL 2

Two-shot on Rogue and Cyclops. She turns to face him, taking his anger in her stride.

ROGUE: You got a problem, Scott?

CYCLOPS: Several.

CYCLOPS: Starting with the fact that you're taking Creed out of our custody.

PAGE 10 PANEL 3

Tight on Rogue. She explains herself with cold dignity.

ROGUE: Creed's been neutralised. I asked Hank to inject him with nano-sentinels.

ROGUE: You know, those little critters Cassandra Nova used on you. They're inert right now.

ROGUE: But Cable or Karima can activate them in a heartbeat.

PAGE 10 PANEL 4

Tight on Cyclops. So far from reassuring him, this answer exasperates him more.

CYCLOPS: And that - - right there - - is my second problem.

CYCLOPS: Sam, don't even think about opening those hangar doors.

PAGE 11 PANEL 1

Out wide. Sam and Cable come up on either side of Rogue, so that Cyclops now seems to be arguing with all three of them – although they don't intervene on her behalf.

CYCLOPS: Those things are lethal. I didn't even realize they were still in existence.

ROGUE: Beast keeps tissue samples from all of us.

ROGUE: We just had to go through them until we found one from that time.

PAGE 11 PANEL 2

Close-up on Rogue's face – not giving an inch.

ROGUE: Creed trailed this trouble across our path, Scott. Seems only fair if he takes his share of it.

ROGUE: Plus there's no one better at staying alive than he is. He's proved that.

PAGE 1 PANEL 3

Close-up on Scott's face, his expression pained and almost disgusted.

CYCLOPS: And if he's taken - - alive or dead - - by the enemy, you've put a mutant-specific WMD right in their hands.

CYCLOPS: Does that strike you as a viable strategy?

CYCLOPS: Does it even strike you as sane?

PAGE 11 PANEL 4

Out wide. Scott turns to Cable as Cable intervenes. Rogue stands with arms folded and head slightly bowed, waiting out the interruption.

CABLE: Cyclops, the Conquistador is airborne, and in US airspace.

CABLE: A combat situation is no time to start overruling your own squad leaders.

CYCLOPS: Nathan, please. This is X-Men business.

PAGE 11 PANEL 5

Tight on Rogue. She's stern, grim, at the end of her rope and staying polite with an effort.

ROGUE: And right now he's an X-Man, Scott. You told me I could pick my own team, remember.

ROGUE: An independent strike force that could handle stuff in the field while you guard the mansion.

ROGUE: No arguments. No limits.

PAGE 12

Go to town, Chris. Glorious pin-up shot of the X-Men on the steps of the Blackbird, about to board and go off to war. They're all present, both the core team and the back-up they're borrowing for this mission: Rogue, Cable, Mystique, Cannonball, Iceman, Sabretooth (no longer chained), Karima Shapandar and Lady Mastermind (now dressed in a reasonable facsimile of her old costume). Rogue, front and centre, delivers her last word on the subject.

ROGUE: Well I chose 'em.

ROGUE: Live with it.

PAGE 13 PANEL 1

Exterior shot of the X-mansion, low angle. The blackbird takes off, and the watching sentinels turn their heads skyward.

PAGE 13 PANEL 2

Inside Rhodes's sentinel. He stares into his imaging scanners and frowns.

RHODES: Okay, they're off again. Lex, follow the leader.

LEX [ON INTERCOM]: Rhodes, you following this comms chatter from the mid-West?

RHODES: Yeah, sounds like a real nasty situation. But we gotta stay put until we're called for.

PAGE 13 PANEL 3

Out wide. Lex's sentinel, Megaton, launches itself into the sky.

LEX: Great. The stainless steel babysitter rides again.

LEX: Well I hope we're going somewhere interesting.

PAGE 13 PANEL 4

Cut away to the Conquistador surging through the skies, wounded jets trailing away from it.

PAGE 14 PANEL 1

In the Blackbird. Tight on Cannonball, who's piloting. He checks his instrumentation.

CANNONBALL: We got a target lock. They're four hundred miles and closing fast.

CANNONBALL: Very fast. They're heading straight for us.

PAGE 14 PANEL 2

Out wide. Most of the team are strapped in, but Mystique touches Rogue's arm as she walks past. Rogue looks at her coldly.

MYSTIQUE: Rogue.

ROGUE: What?

PAGE 14 PANEL 3

Tight on Mystique. This isn't easy to say, but she gets it out with a certain amount of dignity.

MYSTIQUE: I wanted to thank you for your faith in me. I know you had your doubts, at first.

MYSTIQUE: But to go into battle at your side - - means a lot to me.

PAGE 14 PANEL 4

Out to two-shot. Rogue stares at Mystique with obvious hostility. Mystique meets the stare levelly.

ROGUE: You think that's why I chose you, Mystique? 'Cause I got faith in you?

MYSTIQUE: I think on some level you still care about what we - -

ROGUE: Truth is, it's the opposite.

PAGE 14 PANEL 5

Close-up on Rogue's face: cold, hard, deadpan.

ROGUE: I chose you 'cause I don't trust you a homespun inch.

ROGUE: Someone's got to watch you, and never take their eyes off you.
Guess it comes down to me.

PAGE 15 PANEL 1

Out to two-shot. Rogue makes to move away, but Mystique detains her with a hand on her arm.

MYSTIQUE: Maybe that's what you tell yourself, Anna.

ROGUE: It's the gospel truth.

MYSTIQUE: Then look me in the eye as you say it.

PAGE 15 PANEL 2

In tighter, just on their heads and shoulders. Rogue thrusts her face up close to Mystique's, speaks tersely, almost spitting out the words. Mystique flinches.

ROGUE: Say what? You killed Moira. You passed a death sentence on Sean when you cut his throat. And it doesn't seem like any time at all since you were trying to kill me.

ROGUE: If it makes you happy to share risks with me, Mystique, then have a blast. But that's all we're going to share.

PAGE 15 PANEL 3

Out wide. Rogue walks to her seat, with Mystique staring after her.

ROGUE: And on mission time you call me Rogue.

ROGUE: Same as everyone else.

PAGE 15 PANEL 4

Looking past Mystique towards Iceman. She bows her head under a weight of personal pain. Iceman watches, troubled.

PAGE 15 PANEL 5

Looking past Sam towards the others as he turns to call out to them.

CANNONBALL: Okay, better find something to hold on to.

CANNONBALL: They're on visual. Straight ahead. And they're not slowing.

PAGE 16 PANEL 1

External shot of the Blackbird and the Conquistador heading straight towards each other, too fast and too close now to avoid a crash. War Machine flies off to one side, observing.

PAGE 16 PANEL 2

The Conquistador's bridge. Two-shot on Sangre and Aguja. She is alarmed, he is calm and cold.

AGUJA: Sangre - - this is a collision course.

SANGRE: Yes.

SANGRE: It is.

PAGE 16 PANEL 3

Inside the Blackbird. Rogue is on her feet, everyone else is seated, tense and expectant but not afraid.

ROGUE: Ready, Sam?

CANNONBALL: Ready.

ROGUE: Wyngarde?

LADY M: 'S what you brought me for, right?

LADY M: I'm good.

PAGE 16 PANEL 4

Another external shot. The two craft are coming together at top speed, only a few yards separating them now.

PAGE 16 PANEL 5

Out wide for a money shot. Instead of colliding, the two ships interpenetrate, the Blackbird - which is in fact only an illusion generated by Lady Mastermind - sliding through the Conquistador like a ghost.

PAGE 17 PANEL 1

On the bridge of the Conquistador. Part of the Blackbird's wing, in ghostly, semi-translucent form, glides across the room. Aguja stares at it in surprise. Serafina doesn't spare it a glance.

AGUJA: Illusion!

SERAFINA: Of course. Couldn't you tell?

SERAFINA: Aguja, you should adjust your eyes to see beyond the visible spectrum.

PAGE 17 PANEL 2

Cut to the deck of the Conquistador. The X-Men arrive under their own power, having (presumably) put the Blackbird on auto and bailed. Only seven are present, though, Mystique notable by her absence. Iceman glides down on an ice slide. Sabretooth, Lady Mastermind and Cable are carried by the other three, who are all (I think) able to fly or levitate themselves. Karima effectively acts as a flying hoist, lowering Cable on a winch which unwinds from her body cavity. In fact, as we'll discover later, Rogue has kept Cable back as an ace in the hole: the Cable we see here is Mystique.

SERAFINA CAPTION: "The X-Men are already aboard."

SERAFINA CAPTION: "Believing that they have the element of surprise on their side."

PAGE 17 PANEL 3

In tighter, on Rogue, Karima and Cable. They take up defensive stances, Rogue and Karima looking around them warily, Cable consulting some device at his wrist.

ROGUE: Karima? What are we seeing?

KARIMA: Lots of life signs. Lots of movement. Most of it below and to the stern of us.

ROGUE: Creed, where did they come from last time?

PAGE 17 PANEL 4

Two-shot on Rogue and Sabretooth. Sabretooth points towards a heavy blast door built into the bulkhead a few yards away. Rogue watches him calmly.

SABRETOOTH: There. It still smells of them.

ROGUE: Okay. Step out of the way.

ROGUE: Honors go to you, Sam. Go ahead and make us a door.

PAGE 18 PANEL 1

Out wide. Sam launches himself at the bulkhead wall under full power. The others watch.

CANNONBALL: Big door or a small door, Rogue?

ROGUE: Whatever you're in the mood for.

CANNONBALL: Okay, let's go for - -

PAGE 18 PANEL 2

Tight on Cannonball. He suddenly turns, swinging through ninety degrees vertically so that he slams straight into the deck, ploughing into the steel plates so that ruck up like cardboard.

CANNONBALL: Ufff!

PAGE 18 PANEL 3

Out wide, low angle. The Children descend towards Sam as he sprawls on the deck. He's in pain, the heavy gravity continuing to press him down. The Children are not flying - just standing in the air as we've seen them do before. Perro, who is lowest and closest, smiles nastily at Sam.

PERRO: They call me Perro, X-Man. "The Dog".

PERRO: But gravity is my dog, and it does tricks for me when I whistle.

PAGE 18 PANEL 4

Tight on Fuego. He unleashes a blast of vivid flame.

FUEGO: Enough talk. Bring them down.

FUEGO: Later we can discuss the finer details of each kill.

PAGE 19 PANEL 1

Out wide. Iceman steps into the breach, shielding Sam from Fuego's blast with an impromptu ice wall.

ICEMAN: Is that how you spend your evenings?

ICEMAN: Mostly I end up watching re-runs of Friends.

PAGE 19 PANEL 2

Tight on Rogue. She uses her Sunfire powers, launching a beam of heat energy of her own.

ROGUE: X-Men - -

ROGUE [YELLS]: -- ENGAGE!!!

PAGE 19 PANEL 3

Out wide again as the fight goes global, the two teams clashing head-on. Chris, if those robots of Serafina's that were on the cover of #188 have become a regular feature, then they can be involved in the fight too, giving (for instance) Sabretooth and Cable (who can only use his guns, because in fact he's Mystique in disguise) something to cut loose at. Wide-screen mayhem, with Sabretooth going berserk and the various energy-based powers cutting swathes across the deck.

PAGE 20 PANEL 1

In tight on one clash – Iceman versus Fuego. Fuego stalks towards Iceman, playing searing flame over him as he comes. Enveloped in flame, Iceman stands his ground and continues to fight back by launching ice splinters which evaporate against Fuego's aura of terrible heat. Fuego is implacable, straining his powers to the utmost.

FUEGO: This looks like ahogado, X-Man. Stalemate

FUEGO: Ice against fire.

PAGE 20 PANEL 2

Tight on Fuego. He smiles. The bulkhead behind him rusts and breaks into holes as he draws all of its structural integrity, all of its strength, into himself.

FUEGO: And so it might be. Except that I draw energy from what's around me to fuel my fires.

FUEGO: Como un vampiro. You understand?

PAGE 20 PANEL 3

Tighter on Iceman, only Fuego's hands or one side of his body visible at the edge of the panel. Iceman staggers, throws up his hands. He's losing definition and body mass, the flames literally eating him away. He stares in horror at his own arm, in which there's a huge, ragged hole.

FUEGO: I feed on you.

FUEGO: Until there's nothing left.

PAGE 20 PANEL 4

Out wide. Fuego launches himself into the air to join the wider battle which still rages. Behind him, only a little cloud of condensation coils in the air.

FUEGO: Vaya con Dios.

PAGE 21 PANEL 1

Pull back for another wide shot of the battle in progress. In the foreground, Rogue thrusts her hands into Sangre's chest: she's trying to steal his powers, but her hands just pass through him because he's made of liquid and there's nothing for her to latch onto - also because his powers aren't genetic but technological. She looks startled and angry. Further back, Perro and Sabretooth are engaged, Sabretooth slashing wildly as he falls diagonally across the deck towards Perro, who has his arms open wide to receive him. Aguja fires shear planes, ripping metal plates asunder, and Cable and Lady Mastermind frantically duck and dodge them, Cable returning fire as he rolls. Karima and Serafina are locked in combat, tenatacular wires from Serafina's wrists trailing all over Karima, wrapping around her, draining her power as she wrestles to get free. She fires a beam from her arm-cannon, which Serafina deflects with a force field shield.

SANGRE: You can't take my powers, Rogue. They're based on technologies you couldn't even comprehend. Surrender, and earn a quick death.

ROGUE: Always wanted a loud one myself, mister.

ROGUE: And if this is all you got, I've seen better.

PAGE 21 PANEL 2

Tight on Sangre. His liquid substance roils, healing the breaches caused by Rogue's energy bolts. He's completely calm.

SANGRE: If this is all I've got? I'm sorry to have given that impression.

SANGRE: Five people do not constitute a race. We are - - as you might say - - the tip of an iceberg.

PAGE 21 PANEL 3

Pull back, so that we're looking past Rogue towards Sangre. She turns to stare out and down, at us and past us. He stands watching her. In the background, the battle goes on.

SANGRE: But I see we've reached our destination. So the battle is over.

SANGRE: The skirmish, I should say.

PAGE 22

Splash. High angle, looking steeply down. The Conquistador hovers high above the ground. As the battle still rages, Rogue stands at the rail and stares straight down - in absolute horror - at the familiar sight of the X-Mansion. Sangre has lowered his hands, arrogantly certain of victory. At the same time, more Children who we haven't seen before descend onto the deck, so that the X-Men are heavily outnumbered. Chris, I know this is a big ask, but we won't see many of these newbies use their powers: they're all going to get swallowed up in a huge explosion in #193, so you can just draw some interesting and suggestive character designs without worrying too much about what they might do or how their powers might work.

SANGRE: Your precious New X-Men represent the future of your species.

SANGRE: Watch them die, now - - watch that future obliterated at a stroke - -

SANGRE: - - and then you can meet the rest of my family.

To be concluded